



#22

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GAMBIT



ALONE AGAINST
THE **NEO!**

NICIEZA
PAQUETTE
PARSONS



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HE'S GOT THE SPIKE LINED UP.

NOT SO TOUGH A KILL, ALL COMFY-COZY IN HIS NEW GARDEN DISTRICT SAFEHOUSE.

REMY LEBEAU -- THE MAN CALLED GAMBIT -- WAS SUPPOSED TO BE BETTER THAN THIS.

BORN WITH THE MUTANT POWER TO BIOKINETICALLY CHARGE OBJECTS AND MAKE THEM GO BOOM --

-- RAISED AS A PART OF A CLAN OF THIEVES IN NEW ORLEANS --

-- LEBEAU HAD GOTTEN COMFORTABLE WITH A TOPSY-TURVY WORLD BEING THE NORM FOR HIM --

-- UNTIL RECENTLY WHEN EVERYTHING GOT ALL TWISTED UP ON HIM.

NOT ONLY IS HE LEADING A SQUAD OF THE OUTLAW MUTANT GROUP CALLED THE X-MEN --

-- BUT HE'S BEEN FORCED TO ACT AS THE CLAN PATRIARCH TO A NEWLY UNIFIED GUILD OF THIEVES AND ASSASSINS, AS WELL!

SO DOES THAT MAKE IT THE PERFECT TIME TO TRY AND KILL HIM --

-- OR WOULD THE HUNT BE SPOILED BY LEBEAU'S DISTRACTIONS?

REMY LEBEAU HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE OUTSIDER. ORPHANED AT BIRTH, HE WAS ADOPTED BY THE LEGENDARY THIEVES GUILD OF NEW ORLEANS WHO OFTEN SHUNNED HIM BECAUSE OF HIS STRANGE BURNING EYES. EVENTUALLY, HE REALIZED HE WAS A MUTANT -- GIFTED AT BIRTH WITH THE ABILITY TO CHARGE INANIMATE OBJECTS WITH EXPLOSIVELY RELEASED KINETIC ENERGY! HE'S CHARMING. HE'S DEADLY. STAN LEE PRESENTS: THE MOST MYSTERIOUS X-MAN OF ALL!

GAMBIT

FOLLOW THE LEADER

A STORY OF CONFIDENCE & CONCEIT brought to you by:
Fabian Nicieza & Yanick Paquette ♦ **Sean Parsons** ♦ **Kevin Tinsley**
writer • storytellers • penciler ♦ inks ♦ colors
RS & Comicraft's Troy Peteri letters ♦ **Mike Marts** faithful soldier ♦ **Bob Harras** leader

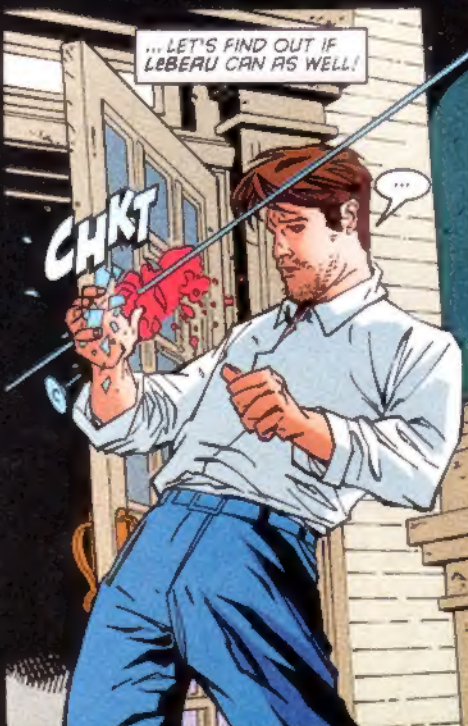
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THE MAN WITH THE ITCHY TRIGGER FINGER FANCIES HIMSELF A LEADER --



-- SOMEONE WHO WOULD RISE TO ANY OCCASION --

-- AND SO, HE DECIDES...



... LET'S FIND OUT IF LEBEAU CAN AS WELL!

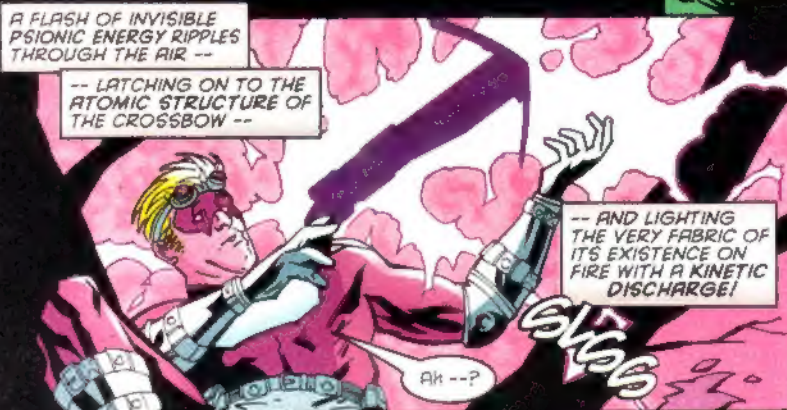
CHKT



I LIKED THIS SHIRT, TOO...

S/S/S

A FLASH OF INVISIBLE PSIONIC ENERGY RIPPLES THROUGH THE AIR --



-- LATCHING ON TO THE ATOMIC STRUCTURE OF THE CROSSBOW --

-- AND LIGHTING THE VERY FABRIC OF ITS EXISTENCE ON FIRE WITH A KINETIC DISCHARGE!

Ah --?

S/S/S

WOOF HOOM



REMY RECOGNIZES HIS ASSAILANT. RAX, A MEMBER OF THE NEO --

-- A GROUP OF EVOLUTIONARY ADVANCED BEINGS THAT CONSIDER THEMSELVES SUPERIOR TO MUTANTS. --

THEY BLAME THE X-MEN FOR HAVING BEEN FLUSHED OUT AFTER DECADES OF HIDING.

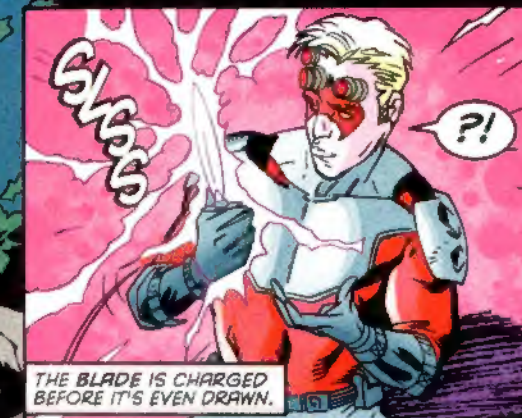
AND RAX, IN PARTICULAR, BLAMES THEM FOR HAVING LOST THE CHANCE FOR A POSITION OF LEADERSHIP WITHIN HIS NEO CLAN.

WHICH MAKES FOR A VERY DANGEROUS THREAT.

OR MAYBE NOT...



Oh, Yeah... PLEASE GO FOR TH' KNIFE...



S/S/S

THE BLADE IS CHARGED BEFORE IT'S EVEN DRAWN.

THE GROUND AROUND RAX IS CHARGING UP BEFORE HE EVEN LETS GO OF THE BLADE!



SEE X-MEN #100. MIKE

WAAHDOOM!

REMY WATCHES HIM MOVE.
GRACEFUL. POISED.
FLAWLESS EXECUTION.

EVEN THE GERMAN
JUDGE GIVES HIM
A "10".

REMY TENSES TO ATTACK.
TAKE THE FIGHT AWAY
FROM THE SAFEHOUSE --
WHERE QUIET BILL AND
HUEY ARE STAYING.

SINCE THE EVENTS
OF GAMBIT ANNUAL
2000. -- MIKE

HE COULD LET THE
NEO RUN AWAY.

KNOWING RAX
WILL BE BACK.

HIS TYPE ALWAYS
COME BACK.

REMY HAS ENOUGH ON
HIS MIND AS IT IS...

... AND OF COURSE, THERE'S
ALWAYS THAT RESPONSIBILITY
PART TUGGING AT HIM --

-- THE NEO THAT ESCAPES
TODAY COULD HURT ANOTHER
X-MAN OR INNOCENT CIVILIAN --
TOMORROW.

PLUS, CHASING RAX DOWN
AND KICKING HIS BUTT
WOULD BE FUN...

... AND REMY'S
ALWAYS BEEN
ONE FOR A
GOOD TIME!

HE SMILES...

... AND FOCUSES ON
RAX'S UTILITY BELT...

... SETTING OFF A
TIME-DELAY CHARGE.

REMY FIGURES,
ANYTHING
TO AVOID...

... WHAT'S GOING ON
AT THE BOUDREAUX
MANSION TONIGHT.

AS
VICEROY
OF TH' UNIFIED
GUILD AND
Matriarch OF
TH' ASSASSINS
GUILD --

-- BELLA DONNA
BOUDREAUX NOW
CALLS TH' MEETIN'
T' ORDER.

YOU KNOW
WHY WE'VE
GATHERED.

IN THEIR
POSITIONS
AS HARVEST
MASTER AND
FIRST KILL --
THEOREN
MARCEAUX
AND GRIS
GRIS --

-- HAVE
PETITIONED
FOR A VOTE OF
CONFIDENCE ON
TH' LEADERSHIP
STATUS OF
REMY LeBEAU.

THOUGH
NOT EXERCISED
IN OVER SEVENTY
YEARS, ACCORDING
TO TH' TRADITIONS OF
TH' GUILD, THIS VOTE
MUST BE OBLIGED.

TH' QUESTIONS
REGARDIN' OUR
UNIFICATION -- AND
REMY'S FITNESS T'
SERVE OUR NEEDS --

-- HAVE ARISEN AS A
RESULT OF THE FAILED
OPENING OF THE
CASSET OF ALL
TOMORROWS.

INFORMATION VITAL
TO TH' GUILD'S QUEST
TO RESURRECT THE
OLD KINGDOM WAS
MISSIN' --

-- DESTROYED BY
THEOREN AND GRIS GRIS,
ALLEGEDLY ON TH' ORDERS
OF FORMER THIEVES'
PATRIARCH -- REMY'S
FATHER -- JEAN
LUC LeBEAU!

WE DON'
KNOW WHY JEAN
LUC DEMANDED THIS
INFRINGEMENT ON HIS
SON'S RULE --

-- OR CREATED
THIS OBSTACLE T' OUR
FULFILLIN' TH'
PROPHECIES OF TH'
KINGDOM --

-- BUT IT
REFLECTS BADLY
ON REMY'S ABILITY
T' LEAD US.

A TASK
MADE HARDER
FOR HIM WHILE
ALSO ENMESHED IN
HIS ACTIVITIES WIT'
TH' X-MEN --

-- AND HIS
LONG-STANDIN'
PROBLEMS WITH TH'
MYSTERIOUS ENTITY
CALLED NEW SON,
WHOM REMY NOW
DECLARES T' BE --

"-- A TWISTED REFLECTION
OF HIMSELF... TRAPPED
BEYOND EARTH!"

INTERLUDE I

SOMEWHERE IN SIBERIA...

A STORY
I'M SURE WE'D
ALL NORMALLY
DOUBT, BUT BASED
ON TH' TINGS WE'VE
ALL SEEN AN'
DONE IN OUR
LIVES --

-- WELL,
WHO CAN SAY
WITH ANY
CONVICTION
THAT IT *ISN'T*
TRUE?

AND TH'
TRUTH -- AS
WE ALL KNOW --
IS A HARD T'ING
FOR PEOPLE LIKE
US TO GRAB
ON TO.

THEOREN AN'
GRIS DESTROYED TH'
CASKET CONTENTS
WIT'OUT KNOWIN' THE
REAL REASONS FOR
DOIN' IT ...

... REMY IS
FORCED TO
BECOME OUR
LEADER WHEN
JEAN LUC UP AN'
LEAVES WIT'OUT
TELLIN' ANYONE
IN HIS CLAN
EXACTLY
WHY ...

... AN' I KNOW
SOMETHIN REMY
TOL' TANTE MATTIE
AN' ME THAT TH'
REST OF YOU *DON'T*
KNOW --

-- WHEN
JEAN LUC PASSED
TH' BURDEN OF CLAN
PATRIARCH ON T' REMY,
HE SAID TH' PROPHECIES
OF TH' GUILD STATED
THAT *LE DIABLE
BLANC* --

-- THE
WHITE DEVIL
WITH TH' RED
EYES --

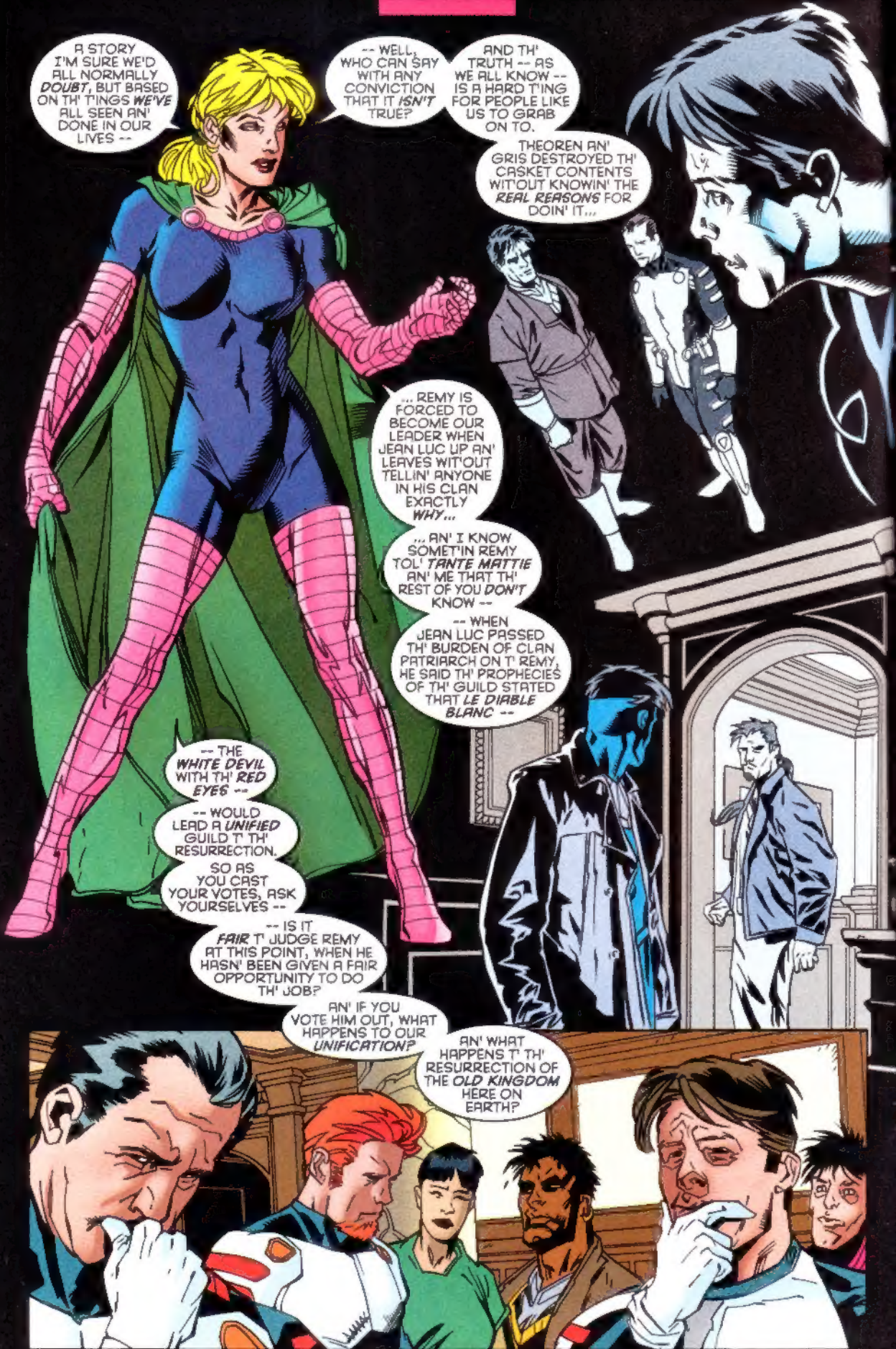
-- WOULD
LEAD A UNIFIED
GUILD T' TH'
RESURRECTION.

SO AS
YOU CAST
YOUR VOTES, ASK
YOURSELVES --

-- IS IT
FAIR T' JUDGE REMY
AT THIS POINT, WHEN HE
HASN' BEEN GIVEN A FAIR
OPPORTUNITY TO DO
TH' JOB?

AN' IF YOU
VOTE HIM OUT, WHAT
HAPPENS TO OUR
UNIFICATION?

AN' WHAT
HAPPENS T' TH'
RESURRECTION OF
THE OLD KINGDOM
HERE ON
EARTH?





MEANWHILE...

REMY HAS ALWAYS
HATED THE METAIRIE
CEMETERY...

...EVER SINCE HE RAN
WITH FAGAN'S MOB AS
A KID AND GOT INTO
TROUBLE WITH A
PACK OF VAMPIRES.

THIS PLACE HAS HAD IT
ALL --

-- FROM THE UNDEAD --
TO ZUVEMBIES -- EVEN A
GIANT SLUG FROM THE
HYBOREAN AGE.



NOW, LUCKILY FOR THE
BIG EASY, THINGS LIKE THAT
HAVE SETTLED DOWN.

ALTHOUGH ALL THE
OLD PASSAGeways
STILL EXIST --

-- FOR THOSE
WHO DARE TO
TREAD THEM.



HEY, RAX,
DIDN'T HAPPEN
T' BUMP INTO A
GENT NAMED
SIMON GARTH,
DID YOU?

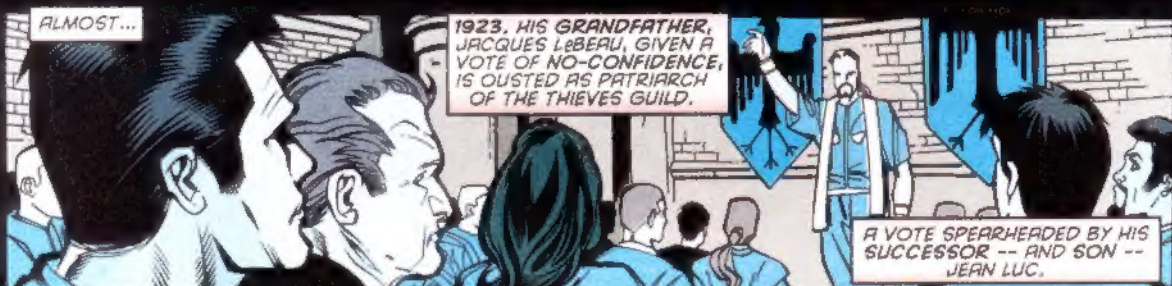
WHOP
NEVER
MIND. INSIDE
NAWLINS
JOKE.
GUESS
WHAT?
WHAT?



TH' HUNTER'S
BECOME TH'
HUNTED!

GLES

WACHOOOM





I KNOW YOU NEO GOT THICK SKULLS, BUT THIS IS RIDICULOUS!

ARROGANT FOOL!



LIKE SO MANY OF YOUR KIND, YOU SPIKES THINK YOURSELF SO SUPERIOR --

KRAAK



-- BECAUSE YOU SPEND YOUR LIVES FLAUNTING YOUR POWERS OVER THE FLATSCAN HUMAN CATTLE!

THWAK



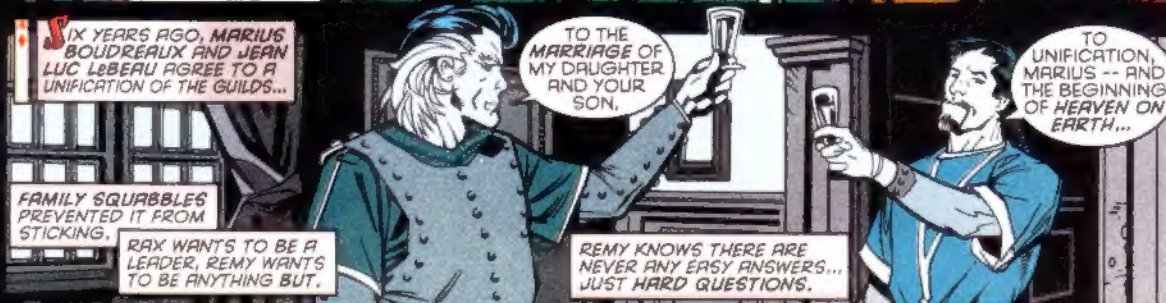
BUT I AM A NEO -- AND YOU HAVE YET TO COMPREHEND WHAT THAT MEANS!

WE WERE MORE THAN YOU BEFORE YOUR KIND EVEN EXISTED!

FOR SO LONG WE REMAINED A PART OF HUMANITY, AND YET APART FROM IT.

WE WERE CONTENT TO LET HUMANITY KILL ITSELF OFF... AND LEAVE THE PLANET TO US.

YOU MUTANTS SEEM TO WELCOME SUCH WHOLESALÉ ARMAGEDDON!



SIX YEARS AGO, MARIUS BOUDREAU AND JEAN LUC LEBEAU AGREE TO A UNIFICATION OF THE GUILDS...

FAMILY SQUABBLES PREVENTED IT FROM STICKING.

RAX WANTS TO BE A LEADER, REMY WANTS TO BE ANYTHING BUT.

TO THE MARRIAGE OF MY DAUGHTER AND YOUR SON,

REMY KNOWS THERE ARE NEVER ANY EASY ANSWERS... JUST HARD QUESTIONS.

TO UNIFICATION, MARIUS -- AND THE BEGINNING OF HEAVEN ON EARTH...

INTERLUDE 2

HE CALLS HERSELF FONTANELLE. SHE IS A MUTANT DREAM-THERAPIST.

FOR MONTHS SHE WORKED FOR NEW SON TO OBTAIN INFORMATION ON REMY LEBEAU.

SHE WALKS THROUGH THE DREAMS OF A MAN WHO CAN WALK THROUGH WORLDS.

QUIET BILL IS A MUTANT WITH THE ABILITY TO OPEN WINDOWS TO ALTERNATE REALITIES.

IN SO MANY OF THE WORLDS BILL EXAMINED WHILE UNDER THE THUMB OF THE NEW SON --

-- HE SAW THIS SAME SCENARIO PLAYED OUT -- IN VARIOUS WAYS -- TIME AND AGAIN.

REMY LEBEAU DEAD, SKEWERED ON A GIANT METALLIC LANCE.

THE PLACES CHANGED, THE CLOTHES CHANGED, BUT THE END RESULT DID NOT.

INDEED, HE MIGHT NOT EVEN BE OF OUR REALITY.

WHY WAS NEW SON SO INTERESTED IN THE DEATHS OF THESE ALTERNATE GAMBITS?

AND WHAT WAS THE UNDERLYING THEME IN ALL THE REALITIES BILL LOOKED INTO WHERE REMY HADN'T DIED?

AND WHICH ONE WOULD THIS REMY TURN OUT TO BE?

HER UNSETTLING STROLL THROUGH QUIET BILL'S DREAMS HAVEN'T PROVIDED HER ANY ANSWERS...

... BUT IT HAS GIVEN
HER SOMETHING THEY'D
LACKED UNTIL NOW...

... KNOWING
HOW TO ASK
THE RIGHT
QUESTIONS!

-- I AM
TO BE THE
HARBINGER OF
HEAVEN ON
EARTH!

NEW
SON... THAT'S
HIM --

-- FIGHTING
SO MANY OF
EARTH'S HEROES --
OR HIS EARTH'S
HEROES --

-- BECAUSE
SOME OF THE
COSTUMES ARE
WRONG --

-- BUT THIS HAPPENED
YEARS AGO! BILL --
JUST HOW MUCH DO
YOU KNOW?

AND WITH
THAT, THE
DREAMER --

-- AWAKENS!

JHNGG --
MORE -- MORE'N
I EVER WANTED
TO

BACK TO
INTERLUDE 1...

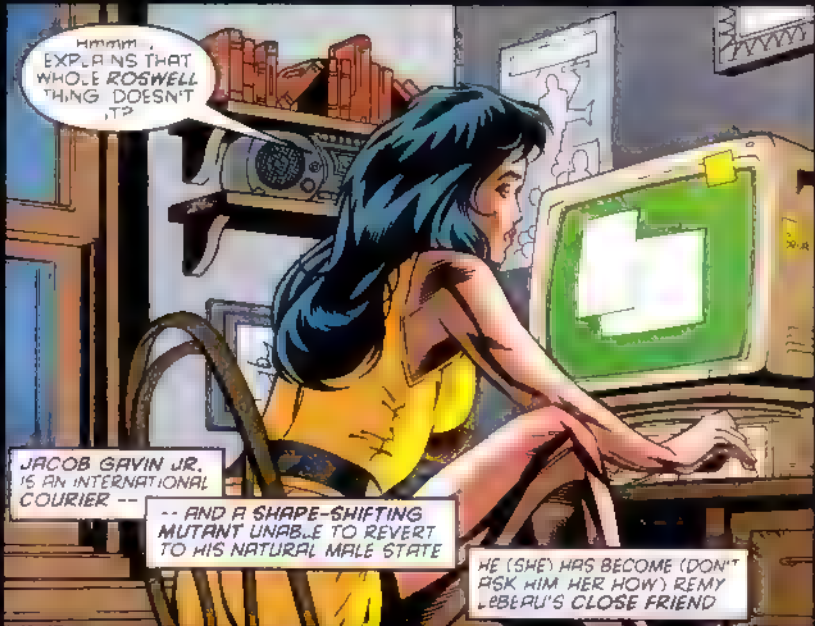
CHATEAU NEW
ABANDON
ALL
GLSSSKRIKCHK

INTERLUDE 3



IN WASHINGTON D.C.,
A YOUNG MAN -- NOW
TRAPPED IN THE BODY
OF A YOUNG WOMAN
(JUST GO WITH THE
FLOW) --

-- CONTINUES
DIGGING INTO
VERY OLD AND
VERY SECRET
GOVERNMENT
RECORDS...



HHMMMM...
EXPLAINS THAT
WHOLE ROSWELL
THING DOESN'T
IT?

JACOB GAVIN JR.
IS AN INTERNATIONAL
COURIER --

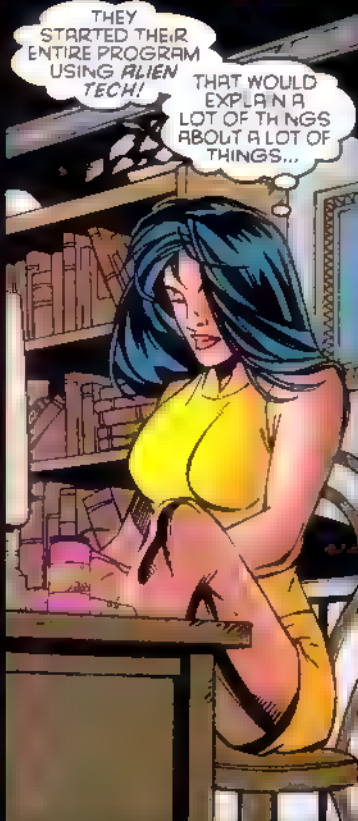
-- AND A SHAPE-SHIFTING
MUTANT UNABLE TO REVERT
TO HIS NATURAL MALE STATE

HE (SHE) HAS BECOME (DON'T
ASK HIM HER HOW) REMY
LEBERU'S CLOSE FRIEND

FOR NOW, THAT MEANS DIGGING
UP INFORMATION ABOUT REMY'S
PAST THAT MIGHT EXPLAIN THE
EXISTENCE OR ACTIONS OF NEW SON...

BLACK WOMB

INITIAL OPERATING PARAMETERS
Investigation and Initiation
of Human Mutation through
the use of recently acquired
advanced extra-terrestrial
technology.
Director of Operations-
Classified
Federal Bureau of
Investigations Liaison-
Fred Duncan
Mutagenics Specialist -
Amanda Mueller



THEY
STARTED THEIR
ENTIRE PROGRAM
USING ALIEN
TECH!

THAT WOULD
EXPLAIN A
LOT OF THINGS
ABOUT A LOT OF
THINGS...



... SOME
ARCHIVAL FILE
PHOTOS ARE
ATTACHED TO
THIS ONE...

THAT'S
THE FED --
DUNCAN -- IN
THE BACK.

BUT WHAT'RE
THEY STANDING IN
FRONT OF --

-- THE
X-CUTIONER
ARMOR?!

FOR ALL OF THEM,
QUESTIONS BEGET
ANSWERS WHICH
BEGET

... MORE
QUESTIONS...



... WHILE BACK
IN NAWLINS...

BY
TAKING DOWN
THE LEADER
OF AN X-MEN
"CLAN" --

-- I WILL
BE REWARDED
WITH THE PROPER
RESPECT DUE
ME!

OH,
C'MON, NEXT
YOU GON'
BULLY ME FOR
MY LUNCH
MONEY!

YOU'RE
GOOD, RAX -- AN'
NORMALLY, WE'D BE
PRETTY EVENLY
MATCHED --

-- BUT I
GOT MORE
POWER RUNNIN'
THROUGH ME
NOW --

-- THAN
YOU CAN
HANDLE!

I COULD INCINERATE
YOUR LITTLE FINGER
WITH A WINK --

-- OR BLOW
UP YOUR WHOLE
BODY -- IF I DID
THAT SORT OF
THING!

SO WHY
DON'T YOU,
BRAGGART?!

COS I
ALREADY TOL'
YOU... I DON'T
PLAY THAT
GAME!

I'M NOT
WIRED THAT
WAY, MON AMI --
S'WHY I D DN' WANT
THESE NEW ENHANCED
POWERS T' BEG N WITH

"... AND WHY I DON WAN' ANY
OF WHAT'S BEEN FORCED ON ME!"

GRIS
GRIS, AS
FIRST KILL
AND MY
BESIDER...

... YOU
CAST THE
FIRST
VOTE



NAY!

AFTER A LIFETIME SPENT LEARNING HOW TO CASUALLY SLIDE THROUGH THE FOLDS OF THE BIG EASY --

-- IT'S AGAINST HIS NATURE TO BE SO OBVIOUS HERE.

A PART OF HIM SAYS, "YOU COULD END THIS WITH BUT A THOUGHT."

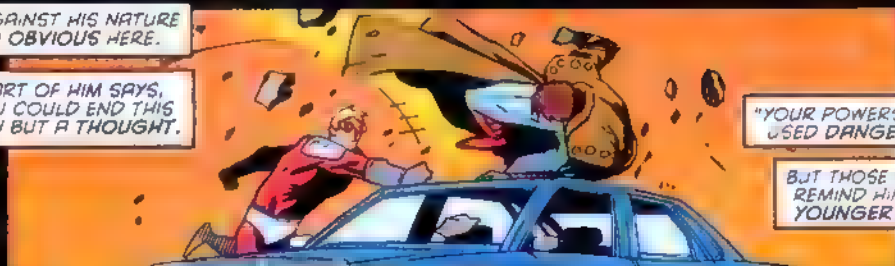


MY THANKS FOR YOUR WEEPY ATTEMPTS AT COMMISERATION --

-- THOUGH ALL THEY'VE DONE IS REASSURE ME THAT YOU LACK THE COURAGE FOR THE HUNT.

OVER THE CEMETERY LEDGE AND OUT IN PUBLIC

HE HATES FIGHTING IN THE STREETS OF HIS HOMETOWN.



"YOUR POWERS COULD BE USED DANGEROUSLY"

BUT THOSE WHISPERS REMIND HIM OF A YOUNGER TIME.



A VERY FRIGHTENING TIME...

... WHEN HE MIGHT HAVE GIVEN IN TO THOSE WHISPERS...

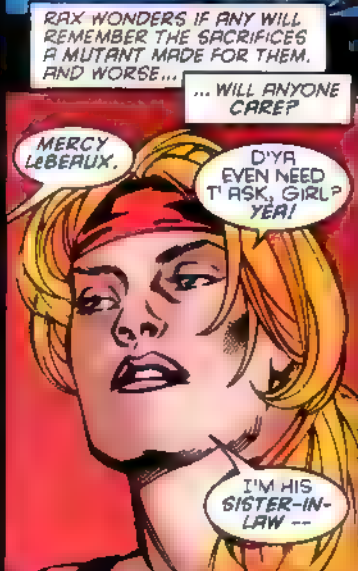
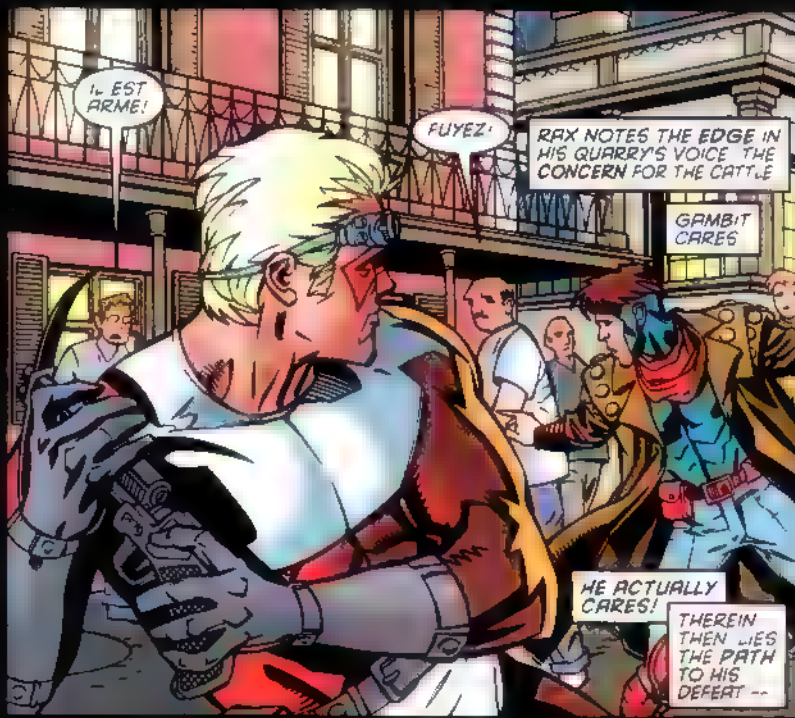
NEVER AGAIN!

HE WOULD RATHER DIE THAN TO LIVE LIKE THAT AGAIN!

THEOREN MARCEAUX.

AS HARVEST MASTER, DISSEMINATOR OF THE GUILD'S ACQUIREMENTS, YOU ARE SECOND TO VOTE

NAY



ONE AT A TIME, HE'LL
SAVE THEM ALL --

-- AND STILL AVOID
GETTING HIMSELF
NAILED

BUT CAN GAMBIT
STILL PROTECT
HIS BACK ..



... WHILE PREVENTING A
LARGE GROUP FROM
GETTING HARMED?



EMILE
LAPIN.

REMY, REMY, HE'S OUR
MAN, IF HE CAN'T DO
IT, NO ONE
CAN!

ANEM.
YES

MINISTERS
HOARD AND
TOME.

NAY

CLAUDE
POITIER.

NAY



SLESSSSSSSS

HE DIVES BENEATH THE
FALLING BALCONY --

-- TRIGGERING A BIOKINETIC
WASH OF ENERGY THAT
CASCADES THROUGH THE
MOLECULAR STRUCTURE OF
THE DEBRIS --



-- INCINERATING ALL OF
IT BEFORE IT REACHES
THE PANICKED CROWD!

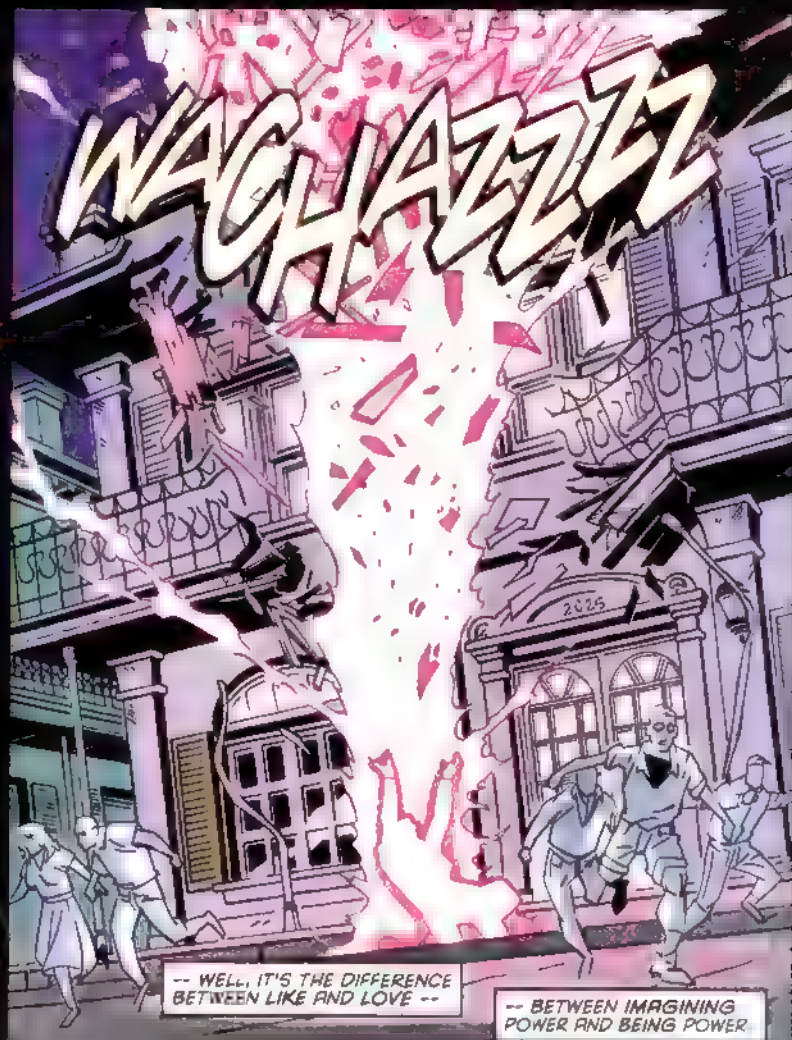


IT'S A RUSH, HE
HAS TO ADMIT

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
CHARGING A SINGLE
MOLECULE IN A SINGLE
OBJECT LIKE A CARD --

-- AND THEN WATCHING
THE DOMINOS FALL
NATURALLY --

AS COMPARED TO GRABBING HOLD
OF THE VERY FABRIC OF THE UNIVERSE
*SELF AND LIGHTING IT ON FIRE --



-- WELL, IT'S THE DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN LIKE AND LOVE --

-- BETWEEN IMAGINING
POWER AND BEING POWER

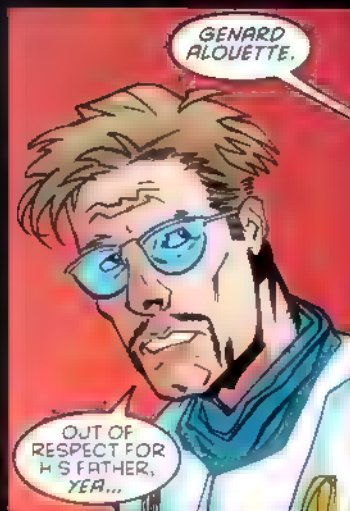


EXHILARATING AS IT IS,
STUNTS LIKE THAT LEAVE
HIM LOOKING FOR A
BOTTLE OF PEPTO BISMOL!



FIFOLET

YEA



GENARD
ALOUETTE.

OUT OF
RESPECT FOR
HIS FATHER,
YEA...



NOW!

RUSH HIM!

STRIKE AT
HIM!

BARE FANGS
AND CLAW --

-- PREDATOR AND
PREY, TIMELESS
AND PROPER --

FCHING
FCHING
FCHING

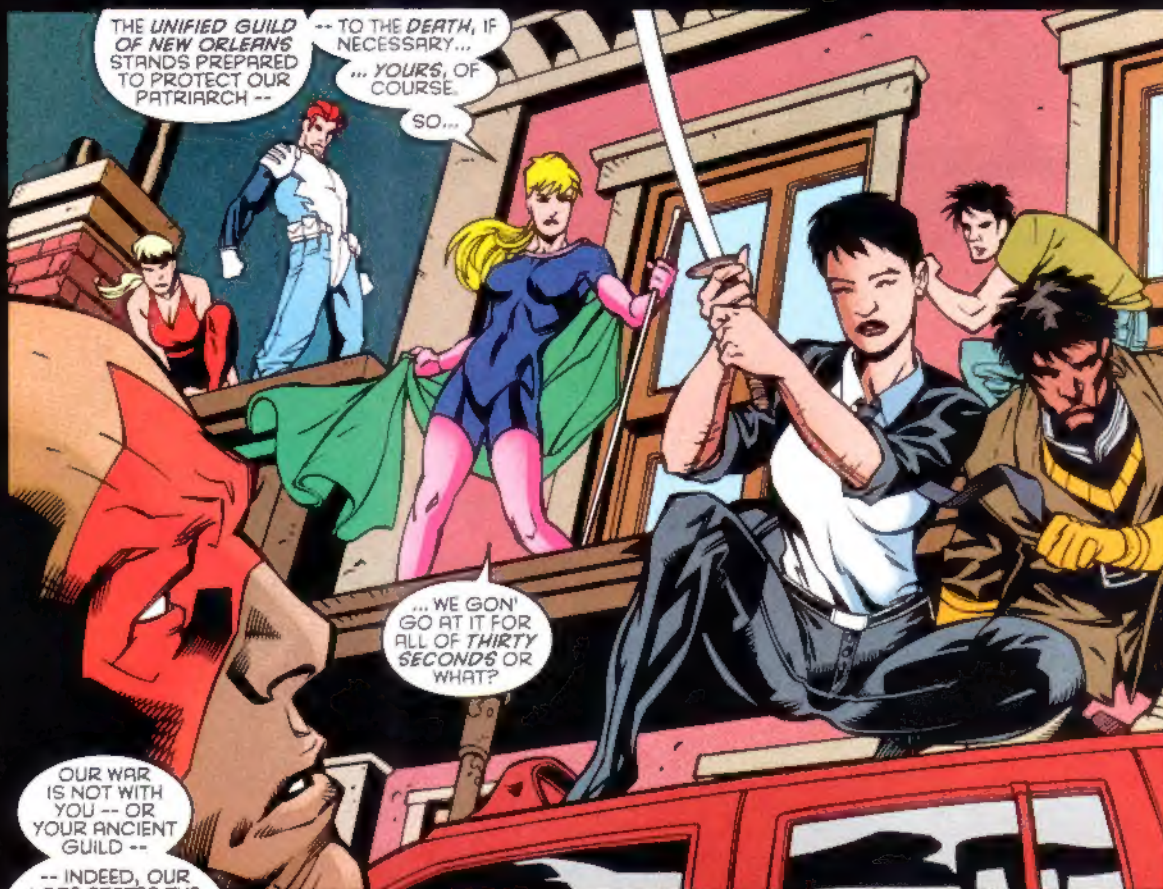


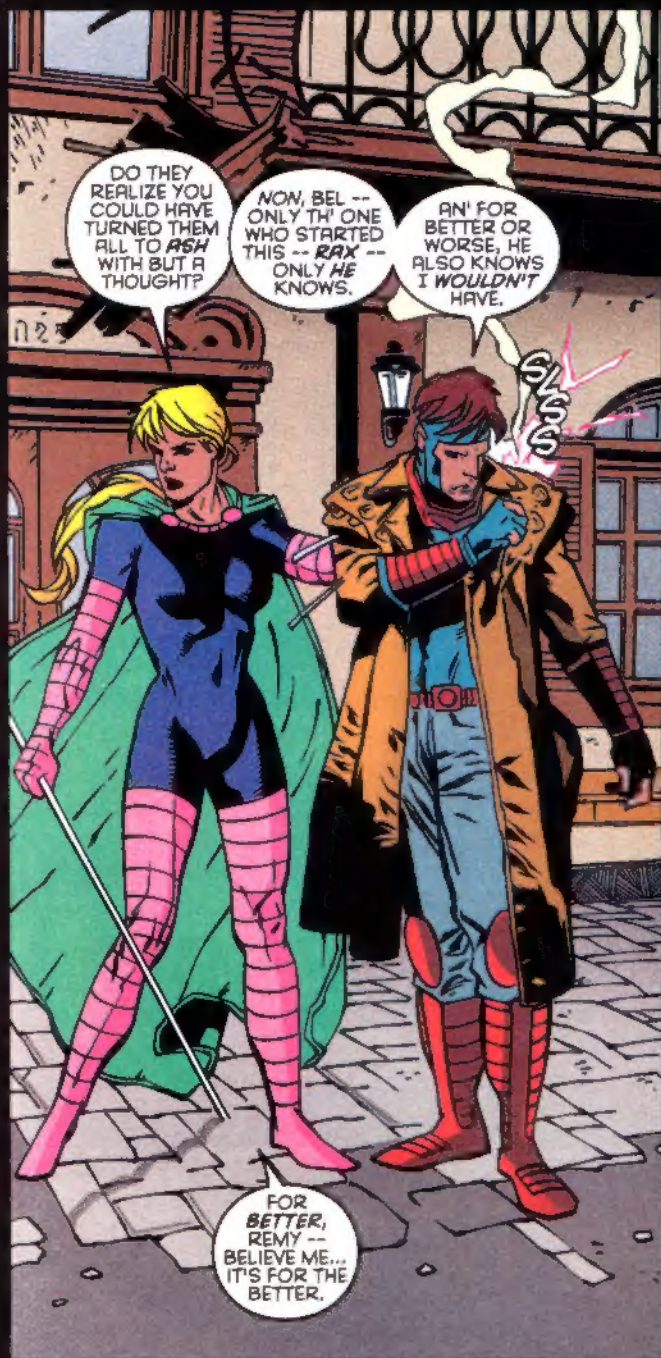
-- THE WAY OF
THE WORLD

THE WAY OF
THE NEO!

TAK
TAK
TAK

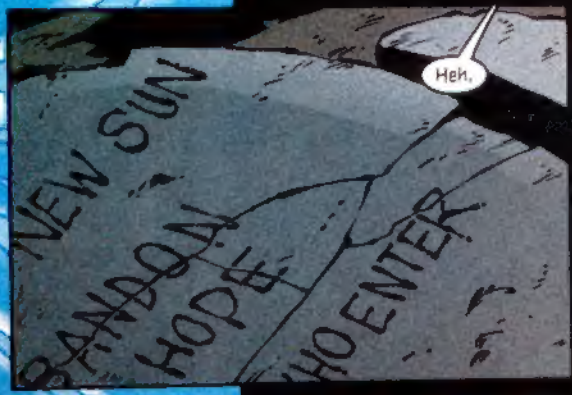








I AM
FINALLY FREE
OF THAT
TRAP!



Heh.



HA
HAH!
ALL THIS
TIME --



-- AND I
DIDN'T EVEN
THINK ABOUT THE
POSSIBILITY...

... THAT
THEY WERE
SPELLING IT
WRONG!

STHSS

KRAKCHZZZZZZ

A
NEXT
ISSUE:
A MAXIMUM
SECURITY
CROSSOVER!
X-CUTIONER!
BLACK WOMB
SECRETS
UNCOVERED!
AND THE NEW SUN
PLAYS HIS FINAL...
GAMBIT!